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Low-Cost Water-Saving Techniques Produce Valuable Results



Photo: Fintrac Inc.

Paprika farmers in Zimbabwe are learning new techniques to conserve water and earn more money.

**“This works,
I wish I had done it
in the whole field.”**

- Rosemary Nyamurumwa, small paprika farmer

Smallholder farmers producing paprika in Manicaland and Mashonaland East are learning innovative ways to combat dry spells and heavy rain.

In early 2011 the rainy season in Manicaland started with excessive rain and was immediately followed by a month-long drought during a critical growing phase of paprika. The ups and downs wreaked havoc on yields.

To ease the impact of unpredictable weather, USAID's Smallholder Technology and Access to Markets Program (STAMP) is working with paprika growers to educate farmers about water conservation techniques such as using mulch to release water slowly and tied ridging, a way of conserving water during dry seasons, and protecting plants during wet seasons by building up miniature dams around the crop, preventing runoff and allowing the water to percolate into the soil.

The program established 55 demonstration plots to teach these techniques and the results are clear. Plants on demonstration plots where mulching and tied ridging techniques were applied are green and flowering and have more paprika pods.

Farmers visiting the demonstration farms for program training learn these techniques with hands-on training to adopt the practices on their own farms.

“This works, I wish I had done it in the whole field,” said Rosemary Nyamurumwa of Chinhenga village, one of 1,520 farmers learning new farming techniques at program demonstrations.

USAID-STAMP is an initiative supported by the American people through the US Agency for International Development that focuses on restoring livelihoods and improving food security by helping smallholder farmers in eastern Zimbabwe.

Visit www.Zim-STAMP.org for more information.

Telling Our Story

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